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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8466
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0498
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0388
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

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STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/PPD, NEA/PI, AND INR/R/MR
STATE PASS USTR FOR N. MOORJANI, J. BUNTIN
LONDON FOR TSOU
PARIS FOR ZEYA
USCENTCOM FOR PLUSH
FOREIGN PRESS CENTER FOR SILAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION: POTUS ISLAMIC CENTER ADDRESS

¶1. On Thursday, June 28, government-owned, Arabic-language daily "Oman" (circulation 38,000) covered the President's Islamic Center address in tandem with news of former U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair's appointment as a Middle East envoy. A box in the center of the front page featured the headline, "Blair Envoy to the Middle East and Bush Creates Special Delegate to the Islamic World." The text of the article was culled from wire services.

¶2. On Monday, July 2, privately owned English-language daily "Times of Oman" (circulation 25,000) published a Washington File story about the POTUS Islamic Center visit under the headline, "Bush Speech Echoes Appreciation for Islam." The story was accompanied by two large color photos. One photo showed the President speaking in front of the mihrab (prayer niche) at the Islamic Center; the other showed him greeting a smiling Abdullah Khouj, the Center's imam. A large caption accompanying the photos was titled, "Celebrating Diversity." A pull quote beside the article highlighted the President's remarks about freedom of worship being "central to America's character." The "Times" published all text of the article up to the line that read, "'in fact it is these radicals who are Islam's true enemy,' he said."

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